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ABSTRACT

This discussion explores some of the emotional factors affecting teachers and children in the educational process and their relationship to early childhood education. One major area of emotional experience in the classroom is related to the child's response to the content of what is being taught. Any novel situation and, in particular, a situation in which new informationb and ideas are being presented, may evoke strong emotional reactions ranging from excitement to fear. These reactions, and the way in which they are handled by the teacher, may influence learning and retention. The second, and perhaps the most important area, is the set of feelings which are inherent in the teacher-child relationship. These feelings -- both the teacher's and the child's -- cannot help but influence what is learned, what is taught, and what is retained. Finally, emotion enters into the classroom as content. Most adults believe, whether they admit it or not, that it is "good" for children to experience strong emotions -- both positive and negative -- in a protective context, in order to learn about the self and about the self's ability to feel and to cope with the vicissitudes of life. (Author/RH)

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THE ROLE OF EMOTION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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When the word "affect" is mentioned, most educators tend to think of the distinction which has been made between "affective" and cognitive" goals or objectives. This division of the learning process into two distinct realms helped teachers build into their curricula concepts /such as appreciation, self-confidence, value and enjoyment, and thus expanded our concept of teaching beyond the pure transmission of knowledge. There is another way in which affect or emotion enters into the educational process: via the direct emotional experiences of teachers and children as they go about their work and play. These emotional experiences, whether we are aware of them or not, have a profound effect on the outcomes of education. As Jacqueline Sanders (1977) has written, "...forces we do not usually attend to have as strong an effect on our minds and on the minds we are trying to influence as forces to which we normally attend."

By "emotional experience," I do not mean attitudes, thoughts or concepts which a teacher may hold about a child, or vice-versa: these are primarily cognitive. "Emotional experience" refers to the actual feelings a person has in relation to attitudes, concepts, persons or events. There seems to be a general consensus among investigators of emotion that humans possess a relatively small set of discrete emotional states (Tomkins, 1962; Izard, 1971; Ekman, et al., 1972). Our "basic" emotions include enjoyment, interest, excitement, surprise, fear, sadness, disgust, shame and anger. There is

evidence that the facial expressions which correspond to each of these emotions are present in newborns or very young infants (Charlesworth and Kreutzer, 1973) and they have been observed to occur in a wide range of cultural and ethnic groups (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1971). Emotions are transitory phenomena, and any attempt to consider them in the educational process requires a level of analysis which is more fine-grained than the level of analysis to which we refer when discussing terms like attitude, concept or value. Emotions are the phenomenological building blocks of our more enduring conceptions of self and other.

In this discussion, I have delineated three areas in which to explore some of the emotional factors in the educational process. One major area of emotional experience in the classroom is related to the child's response to the content of what is being taught. Any novel situation, and in particular a situation in which new information and ideas are being presented, may evoke strong emotional reactions ranging from excitement to fear. These reactions, and the way in which they are handled by the teacher, may influence learning and retention. The second, and perhaps the most important area, is the set of feelings which are inherent in the teacher-child relationship. These feelings -- both the teacher's and the child's -- cannot help influencing what is learned, what is taught, and what is retained. Finally, emotion enters into the classroom as content. Most adults believe, whether they admit it or not, that it is "good" for children to experience strong emotions -- both positive and negative -- in a protective context, in order to learn about the self and about the self's ability to feel and to cope with the vicissitudes of life.

Unfortunately, even when these areas of emotion are pointed out, they are rarely elaborated in a way that would be useful to teachers. In their recent text, McClinton and Meier (1978) suggest that "...the most widely read child-care authorities agree on several points, notably a child's needs for loving attention, interesting surroundings, respect, discipline and freedom of emotional expression." In this paper I hope to provide some theory and research which supports and elaborates this frequently expressed viewpoint.

Emotional Aspects of Exposure to New Situations

Psychologists have long been aware that it is impossible to separate cognition and affect. Each step in the intellectual process of approaching and solving a problem is accompanied by a unique kind of emotional experience. For example, when something attracts our attention and we orient ourselves to that event, the affect we feel is interest and possibly excitement. If a problem is too difficult, we may feel frustrated or angry; if it is threatening, we may feel afraid or bored; and if we solve it, we feel enjoyment and satisfaction.

Does it make a difference to learning whether the child experiences fear, frustration or enjoyment as a result of an encounter with new content? How can we tell which emotions are likely to arise from a given task or from a particular child? While a major determinant of our own knowledge about a specific child's tolerance for novelty and stress is our prior experience with that child, there are two general principles, fairly well substantiated by recent research, about the environment-affect relationship. One principle has to do with the child's <u>familiarity</u> with the new content: how novel or discrepant does the task appear to the child? The other principle is related to the <u>context</u> in which the new content is presented: who presents it, where it is presented, and when (in relation to other content and other events) it is presented.

The first factor, discrepancy vs. familiarity of new material, has been studied in great detail by Jerome Kagan. His studies have focused on children aged zero to five years, but his findings reveal a universal process of human cognition which seems to hold for all ages. According to the findings of Kagan and his colleagues (1978), people become interested and attentive to new information when it is "moderately" discrepant from past experience. If an event — and this could be any kind of stimulus event such as touch, smell, sight or sound; words, pictures or real objects -- is too novel or completely unfamiliar, the child will not attend to it for very long. If the event is very familiar or identical to what has been experienced before, the child will not attend to it. So children are interested by a moderate level of novelty; they may be bored or frustrated with the same old stuff while they may be afraid of or simply ignore things which are completely new. The emotion which results from a learning situation depends, in part, on the match between the child's ability and the complexity-familiarity of the task.

Daniel Stern and his colleagues (1977) discovered that mothers of young infants capitalized on this universal property of human cognition by organizing their behavior into what he called "themes" and "variations." In talking to her infant, a mother will repeat herself many times, either in word or gesture, but the repetitions will not be exact replicas of what went on before. For example, during early face-to-face interaction, the mother of a three-month-old may say "Hi, Christy." "Hi." "Christy, Hi." "HI." "HI!!" in rapid sequence. As she moves from one phrase to the next, there are subtle variations in intensity, pitch, tone and facial expression. Stern deduced that these

variations helped keep the infant's attention at an optimal level. In a peek-a-boo game, the mother of a year-old infant will perform all sorts of variations on the main theme of hiding: she may hide her own face and peek out over her hands, from the side, or from between her finders; or she may hide the infant's face. She may use a variety of objects to hide behind, and she may vary her posture, gesture and intonation so that no two actions are identical.

One way to look at this is to say that the attention span of infants and young children is very short, and that therefore one needs to provide them with a continuous assortment of novel (but not too novel) tasks and variants in order to keep up their interest. In effect, this view defines the teacher's role as that of providing materials to keep the child busy. I do not like this interpretation for two reasons. The first is that it obscures a universal aspect of cognition. The child's cognitive processes, at least according to Kagan, are no different from those of the adult; they are simply somewhat less versatile, somewhat shorter in span, but essentially no different. This concept of sameness between the adult and child facilitates, I think, the adult's ability to identify with the child, and identification is the basis of the adult's ability to empathically tune in to the chid's personal experiences (Olden, 1953). The second reason is that this view ignores the emotional aspects of the learning experience. Phrases like "keeping the child busy," "giving the child something to do," "providing materials," "themes and variations" are descriptive of behaviors and actions which the teacher or anyone can observe. By far the more important aspect of the situation is the child's emotional relationship to those materials, themes and variants. Interest, satisfaction, self-confidence,

distress and fear do seem to be the building blocks of the child's personal experience in learning situations. Kagan's research illustrates that the objective, material qualities of objects and actions are important only insofar as the child can personally relate to them.

It is no less important to understand teachers' emotional experiences in relation to their role as providers of educational materials, one of which may be themselves. There are times when the child's growing enjoyment and satisfaction can produce feelings of self-confidence in the teacher. At these times the teacher hardly notices how much effort is involved in keeping up the rapid-fire pace that children require. But teachers live not only in the child's world but also in the adult's world, which often brings its own set of frustrations and fears, some of which may come from the children. In particular, the very fact of having to keep up the pace, day after day, can itself lead to boredom, frustration and resentment. I think it is these kinds of feelings which create the conditions under which a teacher may perceive the learning process as nothing more than the arrangement and rearrangement of an endless set of materials. One fortunate aspect of the more open early childhood curriculum is the freedom teachers have in changing routines for their own amusement and interest. These variations, very much a part of the adults' desire for cognitive enhancement and enjoyment, feed back into the educational process as a part of emotional refueling; and teachers' liveliness, interest, concern and affection all help to strengthen the emotional ties between themselves and the children. We shall return to this theme in the next section.

The second major principle regarding the child's emotional relationship to new content is that the learning context plays a role in the child's evaluation of the content. Part of the reason for this is that the young child had difficulty disassociating the event from the context in which the event occurs (Piaget, 1973). A classic study which illustrates this phenomenon was done by L. A. Sroufe and his colleagues (1974) with ten-month-old infants. In one experimental condition the infant's mother entered a room in which the infant was sitting. The mother behaved normally in every respect, but she was wearing a mask. This produced a great deal of laughter in the infant. Laughing, like smiling, has been shown to be a reliable index of a positive assimilation of a moderately discrepant event (Kagan et al., 1978; Sroufe & Waters, 1976). In a second experimental condition, after the mother left the room an adult female entered who was unknown to the infant but otherwise friendly. She wore the same mask that the mother had worn. In this condition infants showed fear and distress. Sroufe argued that the mask in the context of the mother was moderately discrepant and therefore enjoyable; but in the context of the stranger, the mask became an object of fear.

Mary Ainsworth and her colleagues (1978) have developed the concept of the mother as the "secure base" from which an infant can explore the world. In her studies, infants from one to three years are better able to play with toys and to explore a strange setting when the mother (or father, or caregiver, or familiar person)is present. If an unfamiliar person enters and the mother leaves, the child ceases to play. A number of psychologists have discovered that some people seem to be better able to learn and create in situations which are familiar and comfortable and in which they feel free

from distraction.

The importance of these ideas to the present discussion is that they suggest that young children's ability to learn is in large measure a result of their perception of the setting in which learning is to take place.

This is not to say that in "positive" settings learning would always be an enjoyable experience. Mastery can be accompanied by feelings of pain, distress and frustration. Part of the role of a protective environment is to provide encouragement and support to facilitate the learning process. It is a myth that as children get older they develop a greater tolerance for the frustrations of learning and mastery. Children of all ages experience the same kinds of feelings over and over, each time they are required to learn new material which is challenging. It is also true that some children can learn in the worst of circumstances — in conditions of physical or emotional duress and under extreme forms of discouragement (Rutter, 1979). These "invulnerable" children present a challenge to any simplistic notions about "good" environments for learning. The point is that the contextual factors which affect learning are different for each child and that the same situation can produce a different emotional experience for each child.

Teachers play a major role in the choice of new material, in the sequence of presentation and in the manner in which it is presented. Ideally, each of these three variables — what to teach, when and how — should change as a function of the age and temperament of the individual child. Unfortunately, the discrepancy theory and the contextual theory are general statements; they do not provide any insight about the specific aspects of objects, behavior, or environment which will attract a particular child. The process of selecting such variables is often an unconscious or intuitive activity, but it is important to be clear about this: the good teacher organizes

materials, sequence, and setting in such a way as to optimize the child's level of emotional arousal in such a way as to balance interest against fear, and enjoyment against frustration. Creating the "right" emotional conditions is the path toward gaining access to the child's capacity for learning.

Emotional Aspects of the Teacher-Child Relationship

The teacher is of central importance in the pre-school classroom. Through the use of learning materials and contexts, he or she mediates the child's emotional experiences related to learning. Consequently, the child comes to depend upon the teacher for support, encouragement and stimulation. Young children may not even separate the teacher's learning-related activities from caregiving functions, and ordinarily the child develops a strong attachment to this adult over a period of time. The teacher can and does serve the function of giving emotional support and encouragement when the parent is absent. Recent research shows, however, that the child's attachment to the parent is much stronger and more lasting than to the teacher (Kagan et al., 1978), even in situations in which children spend a great deal more time with professional caregivers than with parents (Fox, 1977).

In a study by Ricciuti (1974), toddlers were observed in stressful and non-stressful situations in the presence of their mothers and/or their caregivers. It was found that children preferred their mothers to the caregivers, when given a choice, in a stressful situation. If there was no choice, the same children unhesitatingly approached the caregiver for comfort. In non-stressful situations, the same children were able to explore a new environment in the presence of the caregiver in much the same way that they would if the mother were present.

This latter phenomenon -- the ability of young children to explore new environments or objects in the presence of parents or familiar persons, but not usually in their absence, is well known to students of early attachment. In the Ainsworth studies referred to above, this is described as the attachment-exploration balance. /According to Ainsworth, some infants seem to be able to explore new settings freely -- not by ignoring the mother, but on the contrary by soliciting help and affection when needed, and by making independent moves out into the environment, using the mother as a "secure base". These infants, whom Ainsworth has called "securely attached," seem to be able to express their emotions freely and show competence at learning. Ainsworth also identified two other groups of infants. One group stayed very close to the mother in new situations and showed a good deal of anxiety. They could not freely explore, nor did they seem able to derive comfort from their mother's presence and contact. A third group tended to ignore their mothers and spend all of their time engaged with the new toys. Their play, however, was not creatively expoloratory, but rather consisted of banging, hitting and using objects inappropriately. Ainsworth called both of these groups "insecurely attached," and she postulated a link between the infant's relationship to the mother and his or her ability to engage creatively in exploration and learning about new things.

The findings of Ainsworth, Kagan and Ricciuti, when taken together, suggest that children's attachment to the teacher may be an essential ingredient in their overall orientation to the learning process. Although there are few studies which directly compare individual differences in teacher-child relationships with classroom achievement, the attachment literature does imply a relationship between the two.

Some studies with adults indicate the same general relationship between attachment and learning. Schachter (1959) suggested that uncertainty or ambiguous situations which produce feelings of anxiety can lead one to affiliate with other individuals for help in evaluating one's own situation in order to determine an appropriate response. According to Schachter, since emotions are partly cognitive (a point which I discussed in the previous section), they require, like opinions and attitudes, "social evaluation when the emotion producing situation is ambiguous or uninterpretable in terms of past experience." More recent research has shown that both uncertainty and fear are emotions which usually lead to affiliation (other emotions, such as enjoyment, may lead to affiliation but not as consistently as does fear), and furthermore that affiliation seems to work to reduce fear and distress even in adults (Cottrell and Epley, 1977). This is consistent with Ainsworth's notion of the mother as the "secure base" for exploration.

Learning is a situation in which feelings of uncertainty are generated: How should I hold the brush? Is this the way you make a dog? Do turtles lay eggs? Given that children have feelings of uncertainty, would they not prefer to be with others who are more like themselves, peers perhaps, who are experiencing the same kinds of uncertainty? Why would children be attracted to teachers for reduction of anxiety? Mettee and Smith (1977) conclude that "comparison information derived from dissimilar others can be more valuable for purposes of self-evaluation accuracy and favorability needs, and therefore evoke greater attraction, than comparison information derived from similar others." Thus children may be drawn to teachers by virtue of their dissimilarity, their greater ability to comfort the child as compared to peers, and

because of the prior relationship between the teacher and child which, if we can make an inference from related research, includes elements of familiarity and security.

Recognition that children develop emotional ties to their teachers does not clarify how a teacher should behave in this regard. What are the best ways to foster this kind of attachment? How should the teacher handle children's dependence and independence? Unfortunately these issues are complex and require a treatment which is beyond the scope of this paper. There is a large body of research on the relationship between parents' behavior and the cognitive, social and emotional development of their children (see, for example, Clarke-Stewart, 1977).

In another paper I have sketched out in some detail the nature of teacher-child interactions which involve expressions of empathy and mutual affection (Fogel, 1980). In the following paragraphs, I will try to cover the basic premises which, I think, underlie the emotional dimensions of the teacher-child relationship.

First, human interaction which involves the mutual expression of emotion requires, optimally, the use of empathy. In order to be empathic we need to be able to experience what another person is feeling, but not only that. We also have to be aware of our own feelings — for example, how the other person is affecting us, how we feel about helping or ignoring the other person, and how we happen to have been feeling before we encountered the other person — in order to be able to make an evaluation of the situation. Cognitive evaluation is as essential to empathy as emotional sensitivity: i.e.; we must be able to judge how best to respond to the child given a host of factors including present feelings, the child's and our own, past experience with this child, experience with children in general, and the current social ethos of the society or school (Olden, 1953). This very broad definition of

empathy can encompass not only directly meeting children's needs, but also setting limits on children through various kinds of discipline techniques (Fogel, 1980).

Second, <u>because teachers and children are at different stages of emotional and intellectual maturity, there is a marked asymmetry in the mutuality of empathic understanding</u>. Mature empathy, at least as I have discussed it in the previous paragraph, requires both emotional experiences and cognitive sophistication. At the very least empathy requires (to use Piagetian language) formal operational thinking. This is because another person's emotions are abstract entities which we cannot experience directly. We have to be able to hold in active memory our impressions about what we think the other feels and at the same time what we ourselves are feeling, and then we must be able to compare these two sources of feeling in relation to each other (reversibility) in order to make an appropriate evaluation. (See Older, 1953, for a description of this mental oscillation between self and other, or between various courses of action, which is characteristic of the empathic process.)

Since formal operational thinking, or the ability to mentally manipulate abstract entities in a reversible manner, does not even begin until adolescence, it would be unreasonable to expect that children could exhibit mature empathy for adults. There are times, however, when children act in ways which seem empathic. Children at very young ages will commonly go to the aid of other children, or express affection and comfort to others in ways which are entirely appropriate to the situation.

Hoffman (1975) believes that children are born with mechanisms which automatically orient them to the distress of another person. Newborns will begin to cry when they hear the cry of another infant, a one year old child upon seeing another person who is sad may try to comfort that person in the

same way in which the child is accustomed to being comforted, for example by offering a toy or a hug. Hoffman believes that these kinds of altruistic reactions are based on a cognitive egocentrism: the child seems to be experiencing the other's distress as if it were his or her own and reacting in ways that he or she would find comforting. This kind of response also presupposes that children think that everyone will be comforted in the same manner as themselves.

Yarrow and Waxler (1975) have observed similar behavior in preschool age children. They found that there are individual differences in the way children react to the distress of others and that such individual differences seem to persist over time. Thus a two-year-old who is very sensitive to another's cry might cover her ears, while at 7 years the same child might verbally express her discomfort by saying "I just can't stand that crying." Another child who at two offered his own bottle or blanket to comfort another, might later express verbal support such as "don't cry," or "what's wrong?" Other children react to another's distress in aggressive ways such as pushing or hitting at someone who took a toy away from a sibling, or attacking an adult who is trying to discipline the child's friend or sibling. Each of these forms of expression indicates that children are highly sensitive to the distress of others, and each child reacts in a unique way. Children may be similarly sensitive to other kinds of emotions, but there is little published research on their responses.

It is clear that children, in these early, "pre-empathic" reactions, have not considered all of the constraints of the situation; they seem to be responding rather directly to their own immediate reactions to the other's distress. As children get older and mature cognitively, these early

reactions become integrated into a lasting sense of their own and the other person's identity. However, since the love and affection that young children develop for the teacher is likely to be of a qualitatively different nature than the teacher's love for the child, the burden of empathic understanding and genuine emotional support in the pre-school years falls heavily on the early childhood educator.

Exposure to Emotions for Their Own Sake

In the previous sections I argued that affect was inseparable from cognitive learning so that teachers' awareness of learning-related emotional experience should enhance their ability to teach new concepts. Often, however, teachers find it desirable to expose children to an emotional experience for its own intrinsic value. This is a tactic that raises a good deal of controversy. Most adults would agree that it is valuable to make children smile and laugh, to experience enjoyable feelings. But should we deliberately scare or shame children? Should we try to make them angry or sad with the same zest we use to make them laugh? When the questions are posed in this manner, it is difficult to answer in the affirmative because of the lack of specificity of the context of such learning. If we were intentionally to have the teacher be the object of the child's anger or sadness, we would be defeating our purpose of creating an atmosphere of trust and faith between teacher and child.

In the proper setting, however, the exposure to strong emotions can be an educational experience, and it can be extremely rewarding for both teacher and child. Such an emotional setting would involve play and fantasy -- much like the experience we have when we watch a fine movie. A good film, in my view, is one that moves us deeply; one in which we can identify with the protagonist so completely that we share all the sadness, fear, anger and joy of that character's life.

What is it about a good film that allows us to feel powerful, even very negative feelings and still leave the theater feeling more a complete person than before we went in? Partly it is that the film is not real; it is entirely in the realm of the imaginary. Even if we get so caught up in the experience that we believe for a moment that it is real, we don't ordinarily panic because we know that it will end in a short time; we know we will get up and walk out. A second part of the success of a film has to do with the relative ease of discussing our feelings about the film with other people. It is much easier to share openly our very strong feelings about a movie than it is to share the more personal and real feelings of everyday life. And yet, to talk openly about the movie-related experiences is to talk, at least symbolically, about our own life. After all, we bring our own unique form of perceiving and experiencing from real life into the theater, and we tend to take from the film that which we most need to feel at the moment. The best films allow us figuratively to see ourselves in them, but in a way which is not threatening or aversive.

By analogy, stories and imaginary play can serve the same functions for children. Bruno Bettleheim, in his book On the Uses of Enchantment (1977), argues persuasively for this view. He contends that the most important feature of a children's story is that the main character is one with whom the child is able to identify. On the basis of that identification, the child is carried

through a series of emotional experiences. Using fairy tales as the model of the "best" kind of story, Bettleheim shows how the story and characters in the fairy tale provide images which suggest some of the beliefs and feelings of the young child. A complex feeling such as ambivalence toward a parent is represented in the story as a clear division between good and bad -- the fairy godmother vs. the wicked stepmother. This kind of separation between good and bad aspects of the same person seems artificial to adults. We would like the child to see that each individual is a complex mixture of both good and bad feelings, and to appreciate the full mystery and tragedy of life. But according to research on the subject, children are cognitively incapable of integrating the "good" part of an adult with the "bad" part. They may know that the adult at times acts kindly and at other times is mean, but they have not yet established in their world of perception that the adult preserves a continuous identity across all of these transformations. This is because children, until they reach nine to twelve years of age, do not have a continuous and lasting sense of their own identity (Hoffman, 1975).

According to Bettleheim, the fairy tale or story does not create strong feelings in the child. The child already has such feelings and the story is constructed in such a way that the child identifies his or her own emotional history in the story. The end result is that the child feels comforted and secure at the end of the story, much like the cathartic experience of the adult after a good movie. The happy ending to the fairy tale also provides the child with a sense of hope that things will ultimately work out. The happy ending may seem unrealistic to an adult who realizes that life does not always work out so neatly, but for the child, the resolution is a necessary protection from that kind of reality.

It is precisely that clear separation of the story from reality which makes it work so well. Although adults can enjoy being torn apart in the theater because they know the experience is not real and will end, children tend to believe the story to be true and real and even part of themselves. Thus, unreality must be systematically built into the story. The happy ending is one way and the opening lines -- "Once upon a time..." or "A long, long time ago..." -- help children separate themselves from the actual events of the story (Bettleheim, 1977).

Games, teasing and joking serve very similar functions for the child. Instead of a story, adults may create a play situation in which they take on a different identity momentarily, then quickly return to normal. In infancy, the "peek-a-boo" game and the mask game, described earlier, are examples of this activity. The adult creates a situation in which the child experiences a temporary and controlled feeling of loss or fear, after which a very positive emotion follows: the adult appears from behind the mask or out of the hiding place. To use Bettleheim's reasoning, the adult is not creating these feelings out of nothing. Rather, the adult is bringing to the surface the distress and fear which the child already has and may be secretly harboring: the fear and pain of the thought of the adult's loss. When older children imagine, and even sometimes secretly wish for, their parent's or teacher's death, they are trying to deal with their fear of the event. Such fantasies often cause guilt feelings in children, and unless these feelings are dealt with in an appropriate way, the child may continue to feel bad or guilty (Kastenbaum, 1972). The stories and games may help the child to understand that these are acceptable and natural feelings.

With older children, adults play games involving mock emotions: play fighting, play chasing, tickling, and teasing are some examples. Adults also

feign sadness, disdain or anger. Willing credulity leads the child into feeling temporarily those same kinds of emotions or their counterparts. As noted earlier, when an adult prenteds to be hurt, a pre-school child will attempt to comfort the adult in the same way that the child has been comforted in the past (Hoffman, 1975). But the adult controls the extent to which the child experiences the feeling and can break out of the game at any moment — with a smile or a hug — before it gets too serious for the child.

Peer play provides even more opportunities for children to dramatize and experience their feelings. Children seem to have a way of regulating the level of affect of their encounters, but fights and hurt feelings often ensue. Here, the teacher must step in to provide the necessary amount of unreality, in essence providing a firm control over the extent to which the children are to carry out their emotional play.

Because emotional experience depends in part on how events and feelings are interpreted, children are in the process of learning what, when, and how to feel. This kind of emotional education is often not made explicit or planned, yet it is perhaps the most pervasive, since the history a child has with respect to a particular feeling will contribute to the interpretation of that feeling. Sylvan Tomkins (1962 /p. 324) has written,

"Any affect may be learned to be activated by any object. We may learn to be afraid of anything under the sun, or to be excited by everything we encounter."

Tomkins goes on to explain that sometimes experiences can work to enhance affective states, and at other times they can cause a reduction in or withdrawal from affect. He argues that through control of the child's emotions, socialization for adulthood reduces affect. For example, "if, whenever a child expresse[s] its curiosity and excitement by shouting, this disturb[s] the parents, and the child [is]then shamed into silence, activation of excitement in general can become the activator of the shame response, which thereby reduces the excitement before it can become intense or enduring." This can work to the child's benefit; for example, a child may "learn that whenever one feels distress, another individual will do something to comfort one and thus reduce the feeling of distress" (Tomkins, 1962, p. 324).

This kind of emotional learning is a constant partner to children's learning of content. The two are inseparable, since nearly all learning in the preschool occurs in relation to adults and other children. Rather than relegating such essential components of the learning process to secondary, or worse, unconscious, levels, we need to explicitly incorporate them into our methods.

The Teacher's Role in Affective Education

In the preceding sections I have tried to be as explicit as possible about the role of the adult in dealing with the emotions of the young child. Emotions can be the "subject matter" of the educational process, and they are also the natural companions of the child's behavior and cognitions. No matter how emotions arise in education, the extent to which they are understood, fully experienced and utilized for the benefit of the child is dependent almost entirely on the behavior and attitudes of the adult. The adult's power in the affective domain rests in a large measure on the emotional bond between teacher and child.

The emotional security derived from that bond will directly influence the /attitudes with which the child approaches new content. Children often do "their" work in order to please the teacher. From the adult's point of view, we might say such a child is not self motivated. But children of preschool age have not fully separated their own desires from what they believe to be those of the teacher . To say that children work to "please" the teacher is too simplistic: it rests on the assumption that children want something in return for their efforts.

It is true that children want to feel loved and accepted, but their motivation is not deliberatelycontrived to win approval. It makes more sense to describe the things children do for us as gifts, genuine expressions of their love for us. Children, in giving their works to teachers or parents, are expressing pride in their efforts as well as showing us how much we mean to them. Pushing them to be self motivated by refusing their gifts may be counterproductive; our acceptance of their love for us is a primordial educative force.

According to the psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut (1977), a number of factors become integrated over time to form the mature, healthy adult: self esteem, empathy, creativity,and wisdom. It seems to me that each of these terms embodies the fullest expression of the unity between affect and cognition. Self esteem and empathy, while primarily emotional in tone, utilize higher cognitive processes such as judgment and reason. Creativity and wisdom are higher cognitive functions which, as we know from many stories and parables, must be informed by the depth of human emotion. Perhaps we can start children on the road to maturity by approaching them with the wisdom and empathy to recognize the full range of their experiences as they go about the ordinary tasks of living and learning.

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